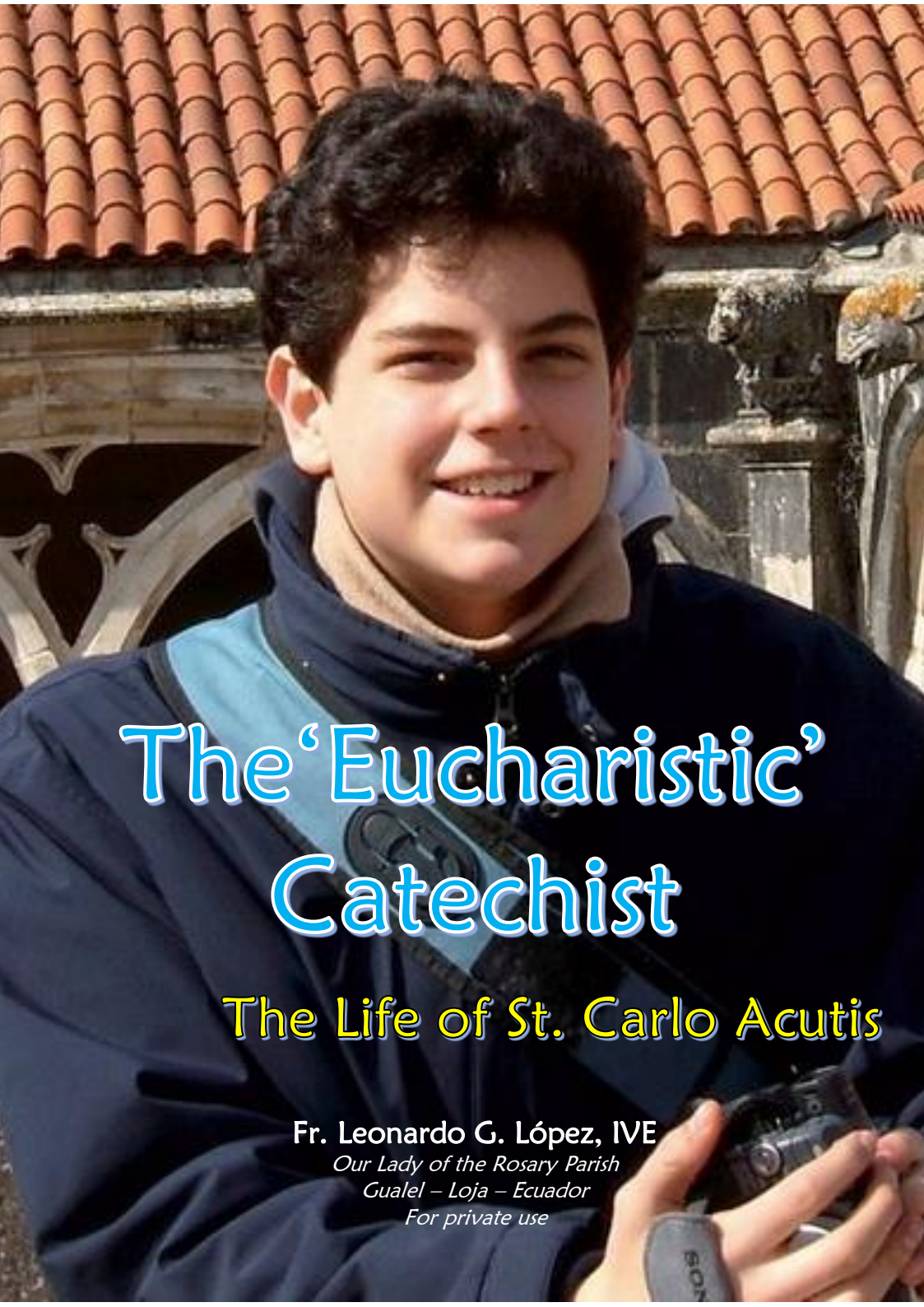


The 'Eucharistic' Catechist

The Life of St. Carlo Acutis

Fr. Leonardo G. López, IVE
Our Lady of the Rosary Parish
Gualel – Loja – Ecuador
For private use

The saints have always
"transformed" the world;
This does not please those
"genuflectors" before the world.

Fr. Buela

INDEX

1. His Childhood ..... page 4
2. His Love for the Eucharist.....page 9
3. Apostle of the Media ..... page 18
4. Carlo & the Bible ..... page 20
5. Carlo the Catechist ..... page 22
6. Thirst for Holiness ..... page 26
7. His Chastity ..... page 37
8. Frequent Confession ..... page 42
9. His Charity ..... page 46
10. Other Virtues ..... page 60
11. Love for the Church ..... page 72
12. Marian Devotion ..... page 74
13. Vocation ..... page 79
14. Illness & Death ..... page 80
15. Miracle for Beatification ..... page 85
16. Miracle for Canonization ..... pag 87

LIFE OF CARLO ACUTIS

1. HIS CHILDHOOD

[1] Carlo Acutis was born on May 3, 1991, in London, England, where his parents, Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano, had their jobs. He was baptized on the 18th of the same month. Later they moved to Milan, Italy.

[2] His mother, who had only participated at Mass three times in her whole life (her Baptism, her First Communion, and her Wedding), says: "Carlo was my salvation... It was he who drew us to Christian practice. It was he who gave us a 'wake-up call' and led us to follow Jesus amid the difficulties and joys of life, to make Christ the star of our existence"[1] .

[1] *From here on, the paragraphs in quotation marks are testimonies from his mother (unless otherwise indicated), and the words* ***in bold*** *are Carlo's own words.*

[3] It was the babysitter, *Beata* who first told him about God. His mother writes: "From an early age, Carlo was animated by a strong desire for spirituality. The presence and influence of his nanny Beata, a young Polish woman, was important in our home. She arrived when Carlo was little. Beata stayed with us from 1992 to 1996, just before my son turned six. It was she who taught Carlo many notions of faith. She began to make him pray for those who were no longer with us, helping him to understand that there is a continuity between earthly life and spiritual life.

[4] "Her presence was also important to me. The untimely death of my father caught me unprepared to deal with all the work problems that arose from it. At that time, my faith was still very immature, and Beata helped me to live that event, - which was a great tragedy for me, as I was also an only child- in a Christian way. She had also lived through difficult times, having grown up during the persecution of Christians by the communist regime, and was a girl accustomed to numerous hardships and difficulties since birth.

[5] Beata told me that Carlo was a very forward child, always asking questions more typical of an older person. Carlo was particularly curious; he was interested in the story of Jesus, and when he went to Mass with her, he was sad because he couldn't receive Communion. With Beata, my son also began to pray the Rosary; some people remember him, still very young and showing off his beautiful Rosary.

[6] Four-year-old Carlo took her to "go into churches to say **'hello'** to Jesus and send **'kisses to Jesus on the Cross**.'" The love her son felt for Jesus led Antonia, a young, successful, and intelligent woman who was far from the faith, to question her way of life.

[7] She signed up for theology classes to answer her restless son's thousands of questions, and little by little she underwent a conversion. She testifies: "I asked a friend for advice on what to do, and she referred me to a good confessor, a priest in Bologna, Father Ilio Carrai, whom many considered to be another Padre Pio... The first time I met him, he told me that he had been waiting for me for years and that I had a mission to fulfill. He listened to my confession and then told me many things about my past.

[8] “He told me about Carlo, explaining that he had been chosen by God for a special task, and he confided in me things that later came true over the years. I was very surprised by what I heard... Father Ilio advised me to study theology to deepen my faith... Those lessons helped me to better understand the Mysteries of the Faith and to be able to competently answer the questions my son asked me. Until then, it had been Beata who read him the Lives of the Saints and passages from the Bible. Father Carrai's advice was that parents should also familiarize themselves with the Holy Scriptures and the Catechism. So we bought documentaries, books, and films about the main apparitions of the Virgin Mary and about some statues of Saints.

[9] “I remember when I was four years old, I gave him a gold chain with a medal of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. My great-grandmother had given it to me on the day of my baptism. From that moment on, he never took it off and told me, **‘This way**, **I will always have Jesus and the Virgin Mary close to my heart**.’ Later on, he would give medals like that to many people. The *Scapular* was one of the devotions my son was most attached to.

[10] "I often watched my son, who always amazed and intrigued me. I watched him as he stopped to pray in front of the crucifix after lighting the candles. At home, I sometimes saw him blowing kisses to a statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague that had been given to him, or to the crucifix hanging on the wall of the house. Once, he even played at being a priest and with his gestures recalled the moments of the Liturgy as if he were celebrating Mass."

[11] At the age of 7, he received his First Communion at the Monastery of Bernaga, in Perego. His mother recounts: "When my son was little, and especially after his First Communion, he never missed his daily appointment with Holy Mass and the Rosary, followed by a moment of Eucharistic Adoration," before or after Mass.

[12] "At Mass, he would talk to Jesus, speak to Him and listen to His words, drawing inspiration and energy for everything he did. His creativity and constructive energy sprang from daily Mass.

[13] Daily Mass was a priority for him, as was Eucharistic Adoration. He was shaped internally by the Eucharist, becoming like a "meek lamb." From It, he learned, without realizing it, true silence, the silence that always says yes to God's will, without rebelling, without asking for explanations, but embracing it with love.

[14] “He spent a lot of time adoring Jesus... He would remain there in silence, as if immersed in an intimate and personal dialogue with the Lord. He said he liked being in that special place: **‘He looks at me,’ he said, ‘and I look at him. This gaze is enriching. I let the Lord observe me, delve deep within me, shape my soul, mold it. He is truly present, He is not an invention. He is there. If everyone could be aware of this, how they would run towards Him! If everyone believed this truth, how their existence would change and how they would improve!"**

Carlo on the day of his First Communion

[15] "Carlo was able to find moments of intense silence and meditation despite his young age: **'I don't speak with words, I just lie on his chest, like St. John at the Last Supper**.

[16] That is why he said that **'through the Eucharist we will be transformed into love.'"**

[17] "For him, being in front of the Eucharist was like being in front of a shining sun. Carlo said, **'In front of the sun you get a tan, but in front of Jesus in the Eucharist you become a saint.**

[18] And that is why he said: **"The Eucharist is my highway to heaven**."

[19] "Carlo, who was very sociable and affable with everyone, absorbed from these intimate and silent encounters with the Lord the *goodness* and *joy* to communicate to others. It can be said that all his *inner beauty* and *his goodness* and *sympathy* in his relationships with others were the fruit of the long time he spent with Jesus in loving silence and adoration.

[20] **"When a thin ray of light enters a dimly lit room, the dust in the air is visible to the naked eye. The same will happen with our soul. When we engage in Eucharistic Adoration, we will be struck by the light that the Eucharist gives off, and thus we will be able to see all the dust that contaminates our soul and prevents us from advancing on the path of holiness, which is normally not visible to the naked eye."**

[21] “For Carlo, the episode of *Moses* praying on Mount Sinai in front of the burning bush is a *foreshadowing* of Eucharistic Adoration. The burning bush in which the Lord reveals himself to Moses is a figure of the Eucharist, of Eucharistic Adoration, which frees us from the slavery of sin... Even the adoration of the Magi and the Shepherds of the Child Jesus placed in a manger is another *foreshadowing* of Eucharistic Adoration... Carlo was very surprised when he discovered that Jesus, in choosing to be born in this small town called Bethlehem, was already implicitly revealing his destiny: to become our food and drink. The word Bethlehem (Beth-lehem) in Hebrew means "house of bread" and in Arabic means "house of meat" (Bayti-Lah).

[22] Many Catholics stay away from Communion because they feel very sinful, but "according to Carlo, the more guilty we feel, the more we must approach the Eucharist as viaticum for our personal salvation.

[23] At the age of eleven, he wrote: **"The more Communions we receive, the more we will resemble Jesus, and already on this earth we will enjoy Paradise!"**

[24] He also loved *St. Thomas Aquinas* and used him to meditate on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

[25] "Carlo said that **'from the Blessed Sacrament present in the Tabernacle radiates that healing love that only God can work...**

[26] **"And we unite ourselves to the Triumphant Church, which is in Paradise, and which at that moment is gathered and prostrate before the Lamb of God, to implore graces and blessings for the whole Church.**

[27] **"In the Tabernacle, Jesus is present in that *attitude of adoration* of the Father to which he wants to associate all men. Jesus wants to teach us how to adore the Father as well."**

[28] "Carlo had a great devotion to tabernacles. He said they should be visited as one would go on a pilgrimage...

[29] Carlo said: **"If we think about it carefully, we are much, much luckier than those who lived with Jesus in Palestine more than 2,000 years ago. The Apostles, the disciples, the people of those times could meet him, touch him, talk to him, but they were limited by space and time. Many had to walk miles to find him, but it was not always possible to get close to him because he was always surrounded by crowds. Think of Zacchaeus, who climbed a tree to see him. We, on the other hand, only have to go to the nearest church, and we have Jerusalem right next to our house.**

[30] **"The people who lived next to Jesus could not feed on his Body and Blood as we can.**

[31] **They could not adore the Eucharist through which Jesus transfigures us and assimilates us more and more to Himself. It is He who, hidden in the Eucharist, gives us *everything* of Himself: His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity, and He will help us to achieve our sanctification.**

[32] "**If Jesus remains always with us, wherever there is a consecrated Host, what need is there to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the places where Jesus lived more than 2,000 years ago? Therefore, Tabernacles must also be visited with the same devotion!"**

[33] "Carlo said**, 'The devil is very interested in Christians being divided, and that is why he causes people to abandon the Eucharist**.' For Carlo, the real reason for the separation between Christians [*Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox]* was mainly due to the slow but inexorable general cooling that over the centuries has compromised fervor toward the Eucharist... **"To have more grace, it is necessary to be assiduous in the Sacrament of the Eucharist... The Sacraments are not seven, but six plus One. Six give or restore grace. The seventh, the Eucharist, is the *Source of Grace.* Therefore, the closer we come to it, the more grace is poured out upon us. Prayers, novenas, pilgrimages, Weeks for Christian Unity, etc., without the Eucharist, are empty words."** I realized that these were unusual words coming from the mouth of a teenager. But these were his words. Carlo was a very simple boy, but at the same time very profound one.

[34] He lamented that the Tabernacles were often deserted: **"The Tabernacle is synonymous with *the cradle of grace*. The Holy Trinity works in the Tabernacle. I see the Tabernacle *as dynamic*. The Eucharistic reality is the proof, the reproof, and the counterproof of this destiny to *holiness,* a holiness that is achieved through fidelity to the Eucharist... The Tabernacle has been close to the saint person, in intimacy with him, for twenty centuries. Frequency with the Saint makes him holy. Consequently, going to the Tabernacle means caring about holiness."**

[35] Carlo had read John Paul II's Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, which exhorts all believers to go to "the School of Mary, Woman of the Eucharist." For no one but Mary can introduce us to the adoration of Her Son. Mary's womb is the first "Tabernacle" on earth. Like John, who welcomed Mary into his home, we too must welcome her so that she may help us become **"living tabernacles**."

[36] "At the third apparition of the Angel of Fatima, the angel appeared to them with a chalice in his left hand and a Host suspended above it, from which drops of blood were falling... and he repeated this prayer for three times:

> *'Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I adore You profoundly, and I offer You the Most Precious Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, present in all the tabernacles of the world, in reparation for all the offenses committed against Him. And through the infinite merits of His Most Sacred Heart and those of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I beg you for the conversion of sinners."*

[37] Then the Angel gave the Host to Lucia and distributed the chalice between Francisco and Jacinta, saying to each one:

> *"Take and drink the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, horribly outraged by ungrateful men. Make reparation for their sins and console your God."*

[38] Carlo took this request from the angel very seriously and so, in addition to Eucharistic Adoration to *sanctify himself* and *intercede*, he also did so to *make reparation for* the outrages against the Most Holy Eucharist.

[39] "I had learned in Assisi and at the Shrine of La Verna how to make *Eucharistic Adoration*. How many times we have been to these places, especially La Verna, where St. Francis received the gift of the stigmata! It was there that we took spiritual retreats with my son. It was precisely in this place that Carlo received the grace to feel the *Passion of Christ* within himself. He had an intense experience that marked him deeply and helped him to *understand the Sacrifice of the Mass better.* I remember that it took him a long time to recover and I saw that he was very touched. After this powerful experience, he began to recite the *Stations of the Cross.* It was then that he began to make wooden crosses from the branches we found on our walks through La Verna, as we walked through the woods. He liked to scatter them along the forest paths as gifts for those who found them, *to help them meditate on the Passion of Christ.* On some of them he wrote phrases, including the one spoken by St. John Paul II during his homily at the Mass at the beginning of his pontificate on October 22, 1978: *"Do not be afraid! Open, open wide the doors to Christ!"*

[40] "He did not considred himself to be better than anyone else. On the contrary. He considered himself a young man like many others who, unlike the others, had discovered that the secret of a happy life lay entirely in abandoning himself to Jesus, in finding him in the Eucharist, in putting God first in our lives.

[41] He asked his friends to try to do as he did: **"Do as I do**, **and you will see what a revolution is unleashed within you."**

[42] “In his life, devoted to *study* and at the same time filled with *friendships*, he always knew *how to reserve the first place* for the Eucharist.

[43] This love for the Eucharist led him to research everything related to the Eucharist as a child, especially *Eucharistic miracles*. And since he was also a brilliant computer expert, he used his talent to create a website that compiled all the *miracles* and provided detailed information about each one, something that did not exist at the time and which, ten years after his death, continues to be consulted by lay people and religious alike. His research, which began when he was only 11 years old, resulted in a work that explains the miraculous events surrounding the Eucharist in 20 countries, with 160 panels that have traveled to more than 10,000 parishes around the world and can be downloaded from http://www.miracolieucaristici.org.

[44] Her mother recounts how impressive it was "to see such a young child spending hours and hours *working* on the computer instead of playing video games or with his friends. He wanted everyone to love God and understand that **"the Eucharist is the most incredible thing in the world."** And more than impressive, because in order to achive his goal he wore out three computers and asked his parents to accompany him on a trip throughout Italy and part of Europe to gather photographic material.

[45] He said, **"If people would come to understand the importance of the Eucharist, there would be such long lines to receive Communion that it would no longer be possible to enter the churches."**

[46] “When Carlo was still alive, there were many amazing Eucharistic miracles in Buenos Aires (Argentina) (1992-1994-1996). Here, the consecrated Host was transformed into flesh, the myocardium. Before Carlo died, I always told him to ask Jesus to perform other Eucharistic miracles, similar to the one in Lanciano, where it was evident that His Real Presence was truly present in the consecrated Host. I believe that my son's intercession was heard, because only ten days after his death, on October 21, 2006, a Eucharistic miracle occurred in Tixtla, Mexico, and shortly thereafter two more in Poland, in Sokolka in 2008 and in Legnicka in 2013. All these miracles, studied by eminent scientists and confirmed by ecclesiastical authorities, are similar to the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. In these cases too, the consecrated Host had been transformed into flesh, which, after careful scientific examination, was found to be composed of heart tissue, the myocardium. Jesus works these wonders to help us rekindle our faith, a faith that often falters.

[47] His mother testifies: "Carlo was passionate about reading the illustrated Bible his grandparents had given him. He was also passionate about reading the lives of the Saints."

[48] He also "really enjoyed reading the Gospels. Every day he would focus on a short passage; a passage that would become as a compass for his day. The Gospel was a gift from God for him.

[49] "Carlo was also an assistant catechist, and here we also experienced a miracle. Carlo was truly convinced that children, from the very beginning, from the first year of catechism for First Communion, should use the Bible. And since he had many students, he would say, **'Mom, I have to give all these children a Bible... but how can I do it? '** Because he had little money... And so he prayed to Jesus, saying, **'Jesus, help me find a way to get these Bibles.** Once we went to Mass at the Dominicans, and afterwards I had to buy a book at the Gift Shop. Carlo went over to a shelf where there were many Bibles on the floor and asked, **"Aren't these Bibles for sale? Why are they here?**" "No, no," replied the saleswoman, "if you want them, you can take them, they are gifts." Carlo took a whole load of Bibles! And that was certainly a sign that we interpreted as the Lord really wanting us to have an approach to the Word from childhood... An 'approach' to the Word, which then—obviously—has to become our daily bread. Why? Because through the Word we confront ourselves and it is then that we grow, and Carlo understood this very well.

[50] "His compass was the Word of God, with which he confronted himself daily. Certainly, one cannot do without Scripture, for without continuous confrontation with the Word of God, there is no spiritual growth and progress to which we are all called. The Word was fundamental for Carlo. He loved to read the Bible...

[51] "He even knew it so well that there are anecdotes from school that when Sister forgot a passage, she would turn to Carlo, 'Acutis, do you remember what passage is...?' and he would respond with the passages."

[52] "In addition to praying the Rosary every day, he loved to pray the *Psalms* and the *Liturgy of the Hours*[2] .

[53] "I remember the words Carlo always addressed to those who *complained*: he told them to look at those who were *suffering more than us*, and especially to look at the example of the *martyrs* who knew how to give heroic witness of the faith, and in their works, becoming 'living Gospels'... Carlo was, in a certain sense, a *page of the Gospel,* a 'new' page, in the sense that he 'incarnated' the Word in his life, he 'lived' it, he gave 'witness' to it."

[2] *Official Prayer Book of the Church, composed of biblical texts.*

5. CARLO THE CATECHIST

[54] His mother recounts: "Although his studies demanded a lot of effort, he decided to devote part of his time to preparing children for Confirmation. He was still in high school. So he asked us for permission. We granted it, on condition that this commitment did not affect his academic performance. He really enjoyed this responsibility and when he couldn't be present at catechism because of his school commitments, he felt very sorry.

[55] "My son taught Catechism to children for a few years and, in order to help them progress spiritually, he created a kit for becoming saints. He wrote:

[56] **'I want to entrust you with some of my very special secrets that will help you quickly reach the heights of holiness. Always think that you too can be saints! First of all, you must desire it with all of your hearts, and if you don't want it yet, you must beg the Lord insistently:**

- **"Strive to go to Mass every day and receive Holy Communion.**
- **"If you have the chance, spend some time in Eucharistic Adoration before the tabernacle where Jesus is truly present, and you will see how your level of holiness increases.**
- **"Pray the Holy Rosary every day.**

- **"Read a passage from the Holy Bible every day.**

- **"If you can, go to confession every week, even if only for venial sins.**

- **"Frequently make *resolutions* and offer *small sacrifices* to the Lord and Our Lady in order to help others.**

- **"Ask your Guardian Angel for help so that he may be your best friend."**

Carlo in Fatima, where the Angel appeared for the second time

[57] "Among Carlo's notes, I found this beautiful meditation to explain to people how truly, on our planet, the Holy Trinity has really been living among us for more than 2,000 years:

[58] **"And the Word became flesh... taking on human nature, associating it with divine nature in a single Divine Person... and came to *dwell* among us. The term *'dwell'* should not be understood in the common sense of having a residence, of having a home on this earth...**

[59] **Before the Incarnation, humanity, imprisoned by original and actual sin, had fallen over the centuries into an abyss that seemed unfathomable and impassable. But at a certain point, 'Love' prevailed over 'Justice', 'Mercy' prevailed over 'Punishment', and 'Sin' was overcome by the 'Incarnation'...**

[60] **"This planet, which has seen the Second Person of the Holy Trinity incarnate for more than twenty centuries, is no longer what it was before... Yes, astronomically, scientifically, geologically, it may be the planet it was before, but from the point of view of the Gospel, of the *Incarnation,* it is no longer the planet it was before: it is a planet that has been incorporated into *eternity,* into a *Divine Plan,* which is why we have been truly involved in this Plan for twenty-one centuries...**

[61] **"We must think of this so-called *'dwelling place'* as an appropriation of the planet by Jesus, the same Jesus who still lives—through the Eucharist—in our midst. He walks among us, lives among us, shares this daily life with us, both in the Eucharist and in faith, so we must see this *'dwelling'* as a true dwelling place of Christ on this planet Earth. We see Jesus among us, we see Jesus with us, we truly see Jesus in us.**

[62] **"And the Eucharist is a 'second incarnation'... When we receive Communion, Jesus, who dwells within us for fifteen minutes, hidden under the species of bread and wine, shares this daily life with us, and continues, after the species of bread and wine have been dissolved, through His grace, His dwelling with us. Thus we become His home, His dwelling place, so that Jesus, present, alive, and true, is not only a fact of "faith," not only a fact of "sacramentality," but a fact of "life," that is, Jesus is with me and I am with Him, as a highly personal, individual fact...**

[63] **"And so we find ourselves before a miracle that leaves us truly amazed and truly surprised. It is the miracle of Redemption, it is the miracle of Jesus' life with us, who, recapitulating in Himself all of humanity, truly and really became the Redeemer, Savior, and Sanctifier of each one of us."**

6. THIRST FOR HOLINESS

[64] "My son was always very sociable, lively, funny, open to everyone, and a great entertainer. He was peaceful and kind, but it is as if all of that wasn't enough for him. He *thirsted for the infinite*. **'Our goal must be the Infinite, not the finite.'**

[65] “Carlo dared to fly as high as the eagles and looked into the distance. From the very beginning, he learned to see everything from God's perspective and not from the world's.

[66] “There was no event, word, or simple greeting that my son did not experience as an opportunity for spiritual growth offered to him by God.

[67] “In many photos Carlo shows up him with a backpack on his shoulder. In my opinion, this is no coincidence. Carlo lived with the attitude of a PILGRIM, always on his way to a distant destination. However, he kept his roots alive, which tied him to the past but at the same time projected him into the future. The true pilgrim must be filled with a dissatisfaction that does not stem from bitterness or disappointment, but from a hope, a *longing for infinity* that justifies the departure. Carlo was a perfect *Pilgrim of Infinity,* always committed to the search for the Absolute.

[68] But to embark on this quest, he repeated that it is necessary *to know oneself very well*, in order to be able to make that *Exodus* from oneself that allows one to go more quickly to meet God and others. In the words of the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, whom he often read: *"Those who are lost in themselves do not have much space, and soon realize that they are trapped in a circle from which they can no longer escape."*

[69] WITH EYES FIXED ON JESUS... "One day we went to a supermarket. Beata and my mother went in, but I stayed outside with Carlo, sitting on a stool. He was about four years old. A red-haired girl with lots of curls came up to me, holding a blue balloon in her hand. She approached Carlo and began to tease him, as if she wanted to play, but also partly to annoy him a little. She also began to pull the blanket he had over his legs. Carlo remained impassive. Then the girl began to make faces at him, stick out her tongue, and made mocking noises. Unperturbed, Carlo looked at her with great sweetness and smiled. I still remember today, after so many years, the astonished face of that little girl who *couldn't understand such* docility... However, Carlo had a *very strong character and knew what he wanted.* But he *shaped his life according to his friendship with Jesus* and always *referred to Him when he had to decide how to behave.* Jesus was for him, throughout the day, *a role model to look up to.* He was inspired by Him. He felt Him present, very close... In everything he did*, he tried to imitate Jesus,* and that is why he entrusted himself to Him, asking Him to help him become better and better.

[70] In his personal notebook, he wrote: **"Sadness is about gazing on oneself; happiness is about gazing on God. Conversion is nothing but raising one's gaze from below to above. A simple movement of the eyes is enough."**

[71] He also said, **"Find God and you will find the meaning of your life."**

[72] "We know that the devil has fought, is fighting, and will fight against this poor humanity until there are new heavens and a new earth. Many men end up being subjugated by Satan, but we know that by entrusting ourselves to Christ we will be victorious. Carlo was aware that life presents us with continuous trials, but if we clothe ourselves in Christ, we will undoubtedly be able to overcome. He liked to make the comparison with the "12 labors of Hercules," from the Greek mythology...

[73] THE STRUGGLE AGAINST SELF-LOVE. At the age of six, he told his parents that he had heard an inner voice, his Guardian Angel, saying: **"Not self-love, but the Glory of God.**" That is why "my son said that Jesus himself commanded us *to deny ourselves* and *accept our crosses* in order to follow Him. Only if we manage to annihilate this 'human self' will all crimes on earth disappear, and all men will live as brothers, sharing earthly goods without envy. Then everyone will help each other, and each person will see themselves in others.

[74] "Carlo sometimes used this expression: **'The anti-self is the other aspect of the self... That is, there remains in us a dark area and an unexplored area that holds incredible surprises. To progress, it is necessary to illuminate that part, to lift the veils that prevent us from seeing, to experience our own 'depths.' This can be painful. Sooner or later, you have to face the anti-self in order to restore balance, harmony, and purity."** For Carlo**, "conversion is not a process of addition, but of subtraction: *less of me* in order to make room for God**."

[75] Carlo was very impressed by the fact that there are people who, out of great vanity, waste many hours of their lives to become more and more beautiful and never go to Mass because they have no time to devote to prayer. He said about this: **'Why do people care so much about the beauty of their bodies and not about the beauty of their souls?'**" Therefore, "**those in need"** were, for him, **"not only the poor, but all those who were deprived of an *inner life*."**

[76] That is why he said: **"Everyone is born an original, but many die as photocopies."**

[77] "As in *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, by the writer Collodi, at first we are all like 'puppets,' but we know that by behaving virtuously, respecting all His Commandments out of love for the Lord, we can transform ourselves and become real men, according to God's plan."

[78] He had been given a *diary*, which he used for personal improvement, planning his behavior, for example, **"how I behave with my parents, classmates, and teachers "** . This shows "the struggle he had with himself; he was very strict and didn't let anything slide."

[79] He used to say, **"What good is winning a 1,000 battles if you can't conquer your own passions? The real battle takes place within ourselves."**

[80] For example, Carlo "loved eating Nutella and ice cream," his mother says. She remembers that there was a time when he gained a little weight, which led him to develop a sense of balance and strive for the virtue of temperance.

[81] Carlo loved soccer and loved playing video games. His favorite console was a PlayStation. He only allowed himself to play for one hour a week, as a form of mortification and spiritual discipline, because he wanted to play much more...

[82] With the ladies who came to clean the house: "Even though it was their job, Carlo didn't think it was right that they had to clean up his mess. He tried to wake up a little earlier to clean his room and make his bed."

[83] Carlo also had to fight a natural tendency to "clown around" and make the class laugh, even his teachers. But he realized that it could become annoying, so he worked hard to improve in this area as well.

[84] "One of his favorite parables was the Parable of the Sower. It was important to him to make the seed *bear fruit* one hundred percent and not let the thorns of life choke it.

[85] He really liked chapter 12 of the Gospel of John, which talks about how unless a grain of wheat dies, it cannot bear fruit. I remember once when this parable was proclaimed during a weekday Mass in our parish. Immediately afterwards, he began to write some reflections...

[86] "He wrote: **'if we manage to die to ourselves every day in the course of our lives, we will be reborn in Jesus'**.

[87] "Among his notes, I found this reflection: **'Jesus speaks of a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and, if it does not die, remains alone. I dare to say that we are all this grain of wheat, because we are all very small, like a grain, but a grain so precious that the Lord expects everything imaginable from it...**

[88] **"But in addition to become this grain of wheat, we also have an intelligence, so we must collaborate in the development of this grain. To foster this development, which allows the grain to become an ear and wheat, two virtues are required which we must practice: *humility* and *simplicity*.**

[89] **"Humility, which is *truth*; humility, which is *reality*; humility, which does not consist in despising ourselves, but in *feeling ourselves beneath God*: first God, then us. On the other hand, the word humility derives from the Latin word *humus,* which means earth; therefore, humble is he who comes from the earth, he who is below, *he who remains below.* If we feel ourselves to be below God, we are in proportion. And in proportion, we are in humility.**

[90] **"Humility *keeps* us *in our place*. It invites us and leads us to *strengthen our gifts*, which we must not despise, but cultivate for the glory of God.**

[91] **"Simplicity is the virtue of *not complicating*, as the Latin term 'simplex' says, and is composed of two elements: *sem* and *plicare*. Sem means 'without', and *plectere* means 'to bend'. The opposite of the word simple is 'complicated', which derives from the Latin 'complicare' and means 'to fold', 'to wrap'. Therefore, complicated means to be folded in on oneself, less simple, confusing, difficult to understand. That is why simplicity is precisely the art of not duplicating, of not complicating, but of leaving everything open, available for the glory of God and the good of our brothers and sisters.**

[92] **"These two virtues allow the grain to come out of the mother earth, develop, and become wheat. This wheat becomes flour, this flour becomes bread, and this bread becomes that species that is needed for the Holy Eucharist.**

[93] **When Jesus speaks of a grain of wheat, he thinks of himself, as consecrated and transubstantiated Bread, and he thinks of us, as people who live on this Bread, and in this Bread we exist, and with this Bread we reach eternity. So let us ask Jesus: "O God, make me a productive grain, an efficient grain, an effective grain. Jesus, make me a grain of wheat so that I may attain Your Eucharistic reality, from which I truly and really live."**

[94] "For Carlo, a good exercise in understanding his own level of humility and inner freedom was to experience the degree of tolerance with which *we accept critics others make of us*, both fair and unfair...

[95] "The intensity of our disturbance will be the thermometer that reveals how high our harmful self-love is, and how far we have to go to rid ourselves of this serious spiritual defect, which, if not resolved, will prevent us from advancing on the path to holiness. By ridding ourselves of disordered loves and attachments, we will be able to love everyone, even ourselves, for the love of God.

[96] *"Visits to places linked to the faith*, where Heaven had manifested itself, were especially important opportunities for him to advance on the path to holiness. That is why we made many trips to various European shrines... Among the various churches we visited was the one where a famous Eucharistic Miracle took place, on Rue des Archives, now owned by the Lutheran Church. Numerous documents and works of art recount that during Holy Week in 1290, a non-believer who hated the Catholic faith and did not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist managed to obtain a consecrated Host in order to desecrate it: he stabbed it and threw it into boiling water. The Host rose up on its own in front of the man, who was stunned, and then went to rest in the bowl of a pious woman, who immediately gave it to her parish priest. The ecclesiastical authorities, the people, and even the king decided to transform the profaner's house into a chapel to house the Sacred Host, which was unfortunately destroyed during the French Revolution.

[97] "Carlo really liked visiting the Shrine of St. Michael the Archangel in Gargano, Puglia. To get there, you go down an Angevin staircase with almost a hundred steps. Every time Carlo descended that staircase, he was very moved; the long descent into the cave seemed to him to symbolize a mystical descent "within oneself," which each of us should make in order to know ourselves better and thus be able to improve.

[98] "As our last visit to the French capital, we decided to go pray at the church where the body of Saint Catherine Labouré, the visionary of the Miraculous Medal, is kept... Rue du Bac is a very long street. We couldn't find the house number we had been given. We went into several shops to ask, but no one knew anything... This made us realize how little faith there was among the French people of Paris. My son felt very sorry for this, because he experienced firsthand the *process of de-Christianization* that has been ravaging Europe for decades.

[99] **"**He often quoted this parable:

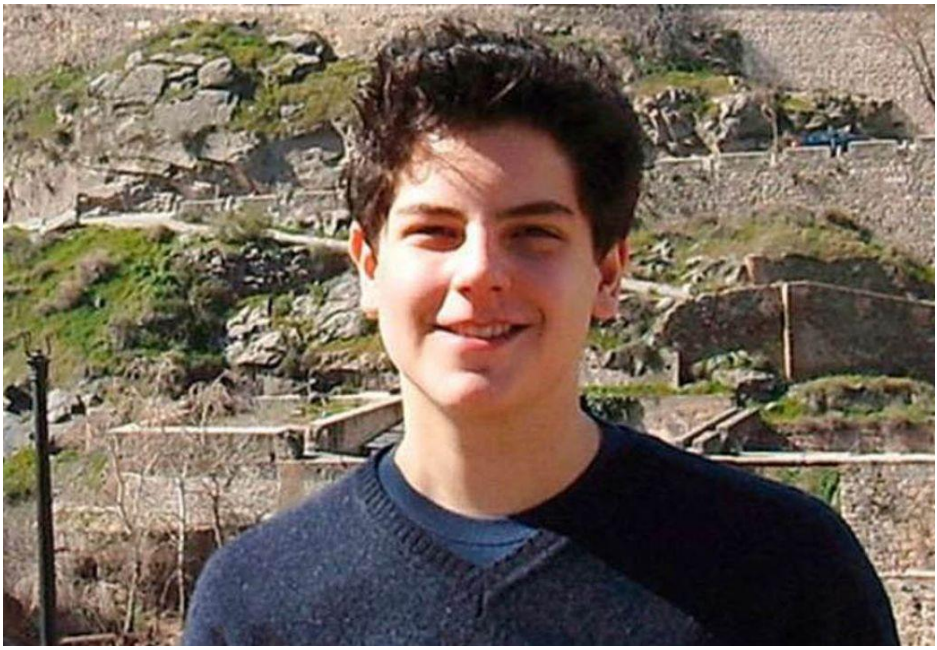
*'A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. He said to the vinedresser, "You see, I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree for three years, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it be wasting the soil?' But he replied, 'Sir, leave it alone for one more year, and I will dig around it and fertilize it, to see if it bears fruit in the future. If not, then you can cut it down'" (*Lk 13, 6-9).

[100] "I still seem to hear his voice repeating that **'in the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, the Lord tells us that he wants to see fruit. He condemns things done halfway. He gave us extraordinary means, the Sacraments, through His Death on the Cross, and He continues to support us, but He wants our *response.* The whole of Revelation is a question that demands constant responses from us. The sacraments instituted by him are also a question. And the Eucharist is the question 'par excellence'. Therefore, we need complete and rapid responses."**

[101] "From time to time, when Rajesh was worried because his hair was starting to turn white, Carlo would joke, ***'I will always be* young**.' And indeed, the desire for holiness *keeps* you forever young.

[102] His mother recounts: “There were many girls who were in love with him: he was a handsome, rich, and successful young man. It would not have been difficult for him to have many girlfriends if he had wanted to.

[103] "But he was aware of the **'great dignity of every human being'** and that **'every person reflects the light of God**.'"



[104] “On that regards, it was clear to him that *sexuality* was something very special and that it had to be for the purpose God had created it for.” So he used to talk to his classmates and encourage them to be chaste. It hurt him deeply to see how young people used pornography for their own pleasure, which was a lack of charity and **“betrayed God’s plan for them**.”

[105] “Carlo was very concerned about the issue of *purity* and the *Sacrament of* Marriage... He said that **‘Marriage has its roots directly in the Heart of God, our Creator, and is an effective sign of Christ's Covenant with the Church’**... If any of his friends criticized the sacrament of marriage by trivializing it, he always reaffirmed with deep conviction that it was **"necessary to follow the teachings of Jesus and wait for marriage before having sexual relations."**

[106] "I remember hearing him scold even those of his friends who boasted about visiting pornographic websites, or who read things he called **'harmful to the soul**,**'** or who openly said they practiced 'autoeroticism.' He told them that by doing so they were becoming **'like the puppets in the book of Pinocchio, the ones that the Fire-Eater used for his performances, and then threw them straight into the fire'.** It was his metaphorical way of illustrating what happens to souls who cannot resist temptations and allow themselves to be led astray and overwhelmed by their own vices... He said, **"Happiness lies in loving others *as God loves them*, not in venting one's selfish desires on others."**

[107] "So many times I heard my son Carlo encourage his friends to live a chaste life, not to be victims of the perverted action of demons, who obviously need the consent of our will to operate, otherwise they can do nothing against us!

[108] He said that his Guardian Angel had told him that **'through pornography and sins of impurity, the devil leads many souls to hell**'. Even the Virgin Mary, when she appeared at Fatima in 1917, told the three little shepherds, Francisco, Jacinta, and Lucia, that 'many souls go to hell because of sins of the flesh'.

[109] "Sometimes I almost felt like I was listening to a priest, and I felt like smiling when I heard him talk to others about the importance of the body as the 'Temple of the Holy Spirit. He often spoke of the Holy Trinity and said that **'the Father has a throne in Heaven, and so does the Son, because He sits at His right hand, while the Holy Spirit considers our heart as His throne, which becomes the Temple of God'**...

[110] "Listening to him speak, I felt as if I were rereading the beautiful pages of the famous novel *The Little Prince*, written by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, in which the protagonist explains to his little rose the difference between *loving* and *wanting*:

> *"I love you" – said the little Prince. "I want you too" – said the rose. "Is not the same" – he answered… To want, is to take possession of something, someone. It is to search in others those things that fill the personal expectations of affection, of company… Wanting is to make ours, what does not belong to us, it is to take ownership or desire something to complete us… To Love is to wish the best for the other... To Love is to allow you to be happy, even when your path is different from mine… When we Love, we give ourselves without asking anything in return*

[111] "Carlo really liked 'The Little Prince.' Perhaps it was the book he identified with the most, although his reading was varied and, in a way, inexhaustible. I can say that he grew up with 'The Little Prince.' He had been reading it since he was very young. He had read it and reread it many times.

[112] "I remember that a year earlier, in the summer of 2005, in Assisi, we would sometimes go to spend a few hours at the municipal swimming pool, which is outdoors and surrounded by the beautiful green slopes of Mount Subasio. During one of these afternoons, I noticed that Carlo was a little upset. I saw him jump up and go to the lifeguard because on the opposite side of the pool there were two young people—about sixteen years old—who were kissing in front of some children, who were looking at them a little amused and a little embarrassed. The lifeguard immediately approached the young people and asked them to stop. Carlo was like that: he couldn't stand *vulgarity,* especially when it was a source of scandal for innocent souls.

[113] "My son always wanted to maintain inner freedom with regard to the media, including computers. He had noticed that many of those who spend too many hours in front of these devices have **a 'dull look' in their eyes**.

[114] "My son knew *how to* understand *the holiness of a soul from the brightness of its gaze.* Jokingly, he always asked me if his eyes were still shining. He often quoted the passage from the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus says that *'the eyes are the lamp of the soul' (cf. Mt 6:22).* According to many, my son's eyes were also particularly bright.

[115] Shortly after Carlo's death, the historical commission for his beatification cause analyzed the entire history of his personal computer, which had been shut down the day before his hospitalization. They found no evidence that he had visited any inappropriate websites; most of the websites he frequented were related to matters of faith.

[116] "One of Carlo's favorite flowers were red roses. He said that the beauty of the body was like that of a rose, which does not last long and is destined to wither immediately. For Carlo, a person's outer beauty was comparable to a sandcastle built by the sea. As soon as the waves come in, they knock it down and all that remains is a pile of sand, just as will happen to us after death. Because we are dust and we will return to dust... And that is why he said: **'In the end, everything passes... What will truly make us beautiful in the eyes of God will only be the way we have loved Him and how we have loved our brothers and sisters**.'"

The Little Prince & his rose

8. FREQUENT CONFESSION

[117] His mother recounts: "One thing that always struck me about Carlo was that he didn't want any 'stains' to sully his soul. He understood very well that the Sacrament of Confession was what he needed to achieve this lofty goal.

[118] "Carlo always recited Psalm 50, the Miserere, where King David, repentant of his sins, asks God for forgiveness: *'Wash me: I shall be whiter than snow [...] blot out all my guilt. O God, create in me a pure heart, renew me with a steadfast spirit...'.*

[119] When he taught the Catechism to children, he always recounted this episode linked to the life of St. Anthony of Padua, to whom he was very devoted:

> *One day, a great sinner approached him, determined to change his life and make amends for all the wrongs he had done. He knelt at his feet to confess, but he was so overcome with emotion that he could not utter a word, while tears of repentance bathed his face. Then the holy friar advised him to withdraw and write down his sins on a piece of paper. The man obeyed and returned with a long list. Brother Antonio read them aloud and then returned the paper to the penitent who was kneeling. What was the astonishment of the repentant sinner when he saw the paper perfectly clean! The sins had disappeared from the sinner's soul and also from the paper.*

[120] "He went to confession every week, almost always with a retired priest at our parish. This priest confided in me that Carlo was a young man of exceptional transparency, very pure. He wanted to improve in everything, both in his love for God and in his love for his neighbor, starting with his parents. He wanted to perfect his friendship with boys his age, with his classmates, with his teachers. He also wanted to devote himself more and more to deepening his knowledge of various school subjects, computer science, and everything related to the faith. Carlo went to the Sacrament of Reconciliation every week to thank the Lord for all the gifts he had received and to improve and overcome even the smallest imperfections that prevented him from climbing ever higher toward the mountain of holiness.

[121] He often used this metaphor to describe the dirt that sin leaves on the soul: **"The smallest of defects keeps us anchored to the ground, just like balloons held up by a string in your hand."**

[122] He also used another comparison to explain the need for confession: **"A hot air balloon needs to release ballast in order to rise to the highest point, just as the soul needs to release the small ballasts that are venial sins in order to rise to heaven. If by chance there is a mortal sin, the soul falls to the ground, and Confession is like the fire that lifts the balloon up to the sky.**

[123] **"It is necessary to go to confession often because our soul is very complex."**

[124] "There was another phrase he always repeated: **'If people truly understood the beauty of being *in God's grace*, respecting His Commandments, they would do everything possible not to commit serious sins and would do their utmost to help those who live far from God.'**

[125] "He often quoted St. Jacinta of Fatima, who said that 'if men knew what eternity is, they would do everything possible to change their lives.'

[126] "Carlo was aware that many, instead of going to confession, prefer to consult a psychologist or a motivational speaker, who will surely listen to them, analyze them, but never suggest that they should convert and change their lives to live happily, and that persevering in sin will only bring sadness and illness. Carlo said that **'unhappiness comes from sin and from taking distance from God. Abandoning sin in order to begin a new life *in God's grace* is the only solution. The psychologist will talk about difficulties, mistakes, problems, feelings of guilt, traumas, but never about sins, about man's relationship with God, about a friendship that is no longer there and that one needs to recover**."

[127] "Carlo was eager to explain that Confession is also called the **'Sacrament of Mercy,' because it reflects God's love for us, who died on the cross to save us and redeem us. From eternity, He has thought of each of us individually**."

[128] He also said that, if possible, it is important **to "always confess regularly with the same priest**."

[129] For him, it was essential in every confession to make resolutions to amend one's life, setting achievable goals.

[130] He said that **"we must look at the priest with the eyes of faith. The confessor is like a doctor for us; for through him, God heals our wounds caused by sin... Through this sacrament, it is as if a ray of light filters through the consecrated hands of the priest, piercing the darkness in which sin has enveloped us. Mercy is the movement of light into darkness**."

[131] **The only obstacle to a good Confession is "the self." By confessing our misery, we will tear down "the self"; then the mirror of our soul will become pure, without shadows, and God, finding no obstacle, will look into it and reflect His own Image**."

9. HIS CHARITY

[132] **CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR.** His mother recounts with admiration the "charity and generosity that Carlo showed to everyone. His great generosity made him interested in everyone: foreigners, the disabled, children, beggars."

[133] "Beata (his babysitter) said that, even as a very young child, whenever he met a homeless person on the street, he would run up to them to ask how they were and say a few kind words to them."

[134] "With his *first savings,* he bought a sleeping bag for a beggar he always saw on his way to Mass...

[135] "When he learned about *the Association of St. Francis for the poor*, run in Milan by the Minor Capuchin Friars, a great field of apostolate and charity opened up for him. They have soup kitchens where they feed thousands of people and provide assistance to the most needy, as well as other services.

[136] "Inspired by this work, he also wanted to help the homeless and beggars whom the friars assisted every day. That is why we often met Father Giulio Savoldi... He always told me that he had never seen *a boy so sensitive to poverty and to the suffering of others.* He met Carlo when he was about five years old. Carlo brought to him all the money he had saved to give to the most needy children. The Capuchin confessed to me that he was very impressed and moved by this little boy, so generous, with a bright face and open to everything beautiful and good. He immediately realized that there was a special

soul hidden within him, one that wanted to help alleviate the pain of those who, in many ways, were less fortunate than him.

[137] “He wanted to help those in need, and he confided in me that when he grew up he wanted to set up a charity place for homeless people who had nowhere to go, because it wasn't always possible to find a place in soup kitchens or public shelters. One of his greatest wishes was to build dormitories where everyone could have their own personal space with a cupboard to leave their belongings.

[138] “He had arranged with Rajesh to bring food to the *homeless people* who slept near our house. Always using his own money, he had bought thermal plates and small thermos flasks, and whenever he saw one of these homeless people, he would go out and bring to them some of his dinner, fruit, cookies, or sandwiches along with hot drinks. Whenever he could, he also gave them clothes.

[139] "I am sure that many of those homeless people who came to his funeral had known Carlo thanks to the impetus he had given them through his daily encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, in which God, giving himself to us, teaches us to give ourselves to others. As St. Teresa of Calcutta said: *"If you do not know how to recognize Christ in the poor, you will not be able to find him even in the Eucharist. One faith, identical, the same, illuminates both."*

[140] **CHARITY TOWARDS THE SICK AND ELDERLY.** "Carlo recognized the living presence of Jesus in the poor and the sick; especially in those who suffer, he saw Christ crucified. He was certain that *in the presence of these people he was in the presence of the Lord,* and so he sought to do some concrete work of charity for them, because helping **them "was equivalent to bring to resurrection Jesus crucified**." When he came in contact with human suffering, he found himself directly projected onto Calvary in the presence of Christ crucified.

[141] "Carlo had met an elderly disabled man whom he visited from time to time to give him comfort and affection. He always brought him candies that he bought with his own money. Carlo was very patient and devoted to *elderly people*. More than once we went together to the hospital to visit a poor old man in his eighties. This man had no one left to care for him.

[142] "Carlo felt great pain when he saw how many people faced *the problem of aging* with such unhappiness and immediately fell into a deep existential crisis. He had met many of these people, and he always recommended them to the Lord to help them heal from their insecurities. Carlo said that the *real disadvantages are internal* and not physical, because the physical ones will end, while the internal ones will remain for all eternity and will be decisive and determining for the level of eternal bliss we will enjoy."

[143] “One of the beggars had a friend named *Giuseppina*, whom he had met at the shelter. She was depressed and was letting herself die in the small garden between our parish and the Tommaseo Institute of the Marceline nuns. She had been sitting on the benches for three days: there were bloodstains on her body. No one had taken an interest in her except Carlo, who asked me to help her get treatment. We managed to convince her to be admitted to the Fatebenefratelli hospital, where she stayed for forty days. We often went to see her. Finally, she also managed to find social housing.

[144] "She really enjoyed *lifting the spirits of the sick*, entertaining them and cheering them up."

[145] “In Assisi, we had *a lady who helped us with the housework*. She had become friends with Carlo, often confiding in him and telling him about her problems. She was distressed because she had a husband who drank heavily and sometimes became violent. I remember that Carlo began to pray and ask the Lord to free the woman from this situation. Miraculously, shortly thereafter, her husband stopped drinking.

[146] “Carlo obtained many graces, especially by praying to Our Lady of Pompeii and offering Masses with the intention of helping those in difficulty. He was very concerned when he saw people who were far from God and immediately began to pray for them. He said that if Providence had placed them before him, it was so that he could pray for them.

[147] "He also obtained many healings of the sick, including a woman who, in addition to being ill, was also very far from the faith. The truth is that she had not been to church for more than forty years. I remember that Carlo began to pray for her, and soon she not only recovered, but she converted and began to go to Mass every day and lead a holy life."

[148] **CHARITY TOWARDS THE POOR 'OF THE SOUL'.** "For him, those in need were not only the poor, but **'all those who were deprived of an inner life**.'"

Carlo & Rajesh

[149] “Rajesh was Hindu. A deep friendship developed between him and Carlo, to the point that Rajesh converted and asked to receive the sacraments. This is what Rajesh wrote about Carlo:

[150] "Given Carlo's deep religiosity and great faith, it was normal for him to often teach me about the Catholic religion, since I am a Hindu of the Brahmin priestly caste. Carlo said that **I would 'be happier if I came closer to Jesus,'** and he often taught me about the use of the Bible, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the stories of the Saints.

[151] “Carlo knew the Catechism *almost by heart* and *explained* it so brilliantly that he managed to enthuse me about the importance of the Sacraments. He had a real talent for teaching theological concepts that even adults couldn't explain. Little by little, I began to take Carlo's advice and teachings very seriously, until I decided to receive Christian Baptism.

[152] “Carlo was for me a teacher of authentic Christian life and an example of exceptional morality.

[153] "I was baptized because Carlo impressed me and passed me on his deep faith, his great charity, and his purity, which I have always considered extraordinary, because such a young, handsome, and rich boy would normally prefer to lead a very different life.

[154] “Carlo was such a high example of spirituality and holiness that I felt within myself the desire to convert to Christianity so that I could receive Communion.

[155] “He explained to me the importance of receiving the Eucharist daily and praying to the Virgin Mary through the Holy Rosary, trying to imitate her heroic virtues. The boy always told me that **'virtues are acquired mainly through an intense sacramental life'** and that the Eucharist is certainly the culmination of charity and that **'through this Sacrament, the Lord makes us whole persons, made in His Image'**..."

[156] "And he quoted to me, by heart, the words of chapter six from the Gospel of St. John, where Jesus says: *'Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood remains in Me, and I in him, and I will raise him up on the last day'*; and then he explained to me that the Eucharist is the Heart of Christ.

[157] "Once he also spoke to me about the importance of the practice of the First nine Fridays of the Month to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the First five Saturdays of the Month to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He said that **"the Hearts of Jesus and Mary are inseparably united, and that when you receive Communion, you are also in direct contact with Our Lady and the Saints in Paradise**."

[158] He also said that **'God is very happy when souls frequently approach the great gifts that are the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Confession**'.

[159] He also explained and prepared me to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, telling me that it was very important. He told me that when he received the Sacrament of Confirmation, he felt within himself **"a mysterious force that enveloped him**," and that since then his **"devotion to the Eucharist had grown.**" When I received the Sacrament of Confirmation, I experienced the same thing.

[160] "What impressed me most about Carlo was his great purity and his fidelity to daily Holy Mass. Carlo had such a luminous vision of the Catholic faith that the serenity and gentleness with which he presented the truths of the faith was contagious to everyone" (end of Rajesh's testimony).

[161] **CHARITY TOWARDS FRIENDS.** "He often thought about his friends. He carried them everywhere in his heart. He always prayed for them, even offering small sacrifices. The truth is that *friendship was very important to him*. Wanting the best for his friends, desiring their well-being, meant **'wanting the best for their souls**.'"

[162] "In these matters, too, he allowed himself to be taught in a certain sense by The Little Prince, a book that had a profound influence on his life. He often repeated the fox's phrase: *'What makes your rose so important is the time you have spent with her.'* **'It is the time we spend with our friends,** he would repeat, **that makes them special and unique. A time that must always have the love for God at its center. Then it will truly be quality time.'**

[163] "Even from afar, Carlo was always close to his friends by phone or via the Internet. *He tried to make everyone feel unique, special, irreplace*able... For Carlo, everyone had something to give to others: to share, to make each other special, and to contribute to the fulfillment of all. Devoting time to others allows you to create unique bonds that withstand the elements of time...

[164] "The truth is that he cared little about himself; every day was dedicated to others, to this world of his, which was basically small but special and unique in his heart.

[165] "Carlo *always took the side of the weakest*. It was a natural attitude. There was no classmate in difficulty who did not find in him a safe haven, a refuge from the attacks of others. Because he loved the poor, he loved the least, the weak, the disabled. He went out of his way for them without fear of what others might say. But in general, he was always available to all his classmates, helping them with their homework or solving problems related to the use of computers.

[166] "He was a computer whiz, reading computer engineering texts and leaving everyone amazed, but he put this gift at the service of volunteering and used it to help his friends."

[167] Carlo told his friends that they too had **"a special purpose from God since Eternity**." And that they **"can be saints, the important thing is to will it**."

[168] “Carlo had a charitable nature that manifested itself not only with his friends and schoolmates, but also with anyone who came into contact with him. I was told that on his bike ride from home to school, *he would stop to* greet the doormen of the houses in the neighborhood, who were mostly from outside the European Union. He had become friends with all of them. *He* always *had words of encouragement and solidarity for all* of them. He made no distinctions based on religion or nationality; with Carlo, all those 'walls' of indifference and suspicion that are often erected, especially by those who live in big cities, came crashing down. *He saw Christ in everyone and loved them all*."

[169] **CHARITY TOWARDS SINNERS.** “Carlo was impressed by Jesus' great promise of *final perseverance* to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, to anyone who approached *Communion on the first nine Fridays of the month.* He spread this practice among his acquaintances and tried to get them to participate in the reparation. He felt deeply this invitation to pray and offer sacrifices for sinners and for those who were far from divine grace.

[170] “During one of our stays at the municipal swimming pool in Assisi, which in summer is frequented by local children, we heard many of them using foul language (blasphemies). On this occasion, some of these young people, whom Carlo courageously rebuked, inviting them to stop railing against God, threatened him. But he was not intimidated and reacted courageously. He quoted to them what the saints say against those who blaspheme...

[171] "He had taken note of the words that Padre Pio had said about blasphemy: *'It is the surest way to go to hell. It is the devil in your mouth,"* he would tell them. He was also familiar with St. Augustine, who thundered against all those who offend God: *'Blasphemy is even more serious than the death of Jesus Christ because those who crucified Jesus did not know what they were doing and did not recognize Jesus as the true God, while those who blaspheme usually know what they are saying and know who God is.'* And then, again, the words of St. Thomas Aquinas: *"Blasphemy is the greatest of all sins."* And finally, Saint Bernardino of Siena: *"It is the greatest sin that exists... greater than pride, murder, anger, lust, and gluttony... The tongue of the blasphemer is a sword that pierces the name of God*"...

[172] The boys listened. A little stunned, they didn't react. They stopped threatening him and left. I don't know what they were thinking at the time. But I am sure that once they got home, Carlo's words began to work in their hearts.

[173] **CHARITY TOWARDS THE DEAD.** "From an early age, Carlo felt a strong bond with people who are no longer with us, *with the dead*. He always said that **'the relationship with them continues, even if we live in a different way. There is a thread that binds us to them, a thread of love that continues forever. That is why it is right to talk to them; the relationship is meant to last forever**.'"

[174] "He understood this well when my father died. He left us at the age of fifty-nine, from a sudden heart attack. There was a special harmony between Carlo and his grandfather. Because my son, when he was still a child, had spent a lot of time with him and my mother in their house in Rome and by the sea, and this had strengthened their bond.

[175] A few months after his grandfather's death, Carlo confided in me that he had appeared to him dressed in blue. He said that he had asked him to pray for him because he was in Purgatory, but that he was fine because he was saved. Carlo told me these things with simplicity and disarming confidence. He had no doubts: his grandfather had spoken to him.

[176] “Later, he confided in me that he had received other inner signs through which the Lord made him understand that it was important to maintain a relationship with the dead: to pray for these souls and ask them to help us.

[177] "Carlo's privileged means of helping them were the Eucharist and praying the Rosary. Carlo said that if we realized in our lifetime the infinite value of a single Mass for Eternal Life, the churches would be so full that it would no longer be possible to enter. For Carlo, **"who else but God, who offers himself to God, can intercede for us?"**

[178] “Carlo said that, above all, **‘through Eucharistic Adoration**,**’** prolonging this holy practice for at least half an hour, one can gain a Plenary Indulgence, under the conditions established by the Church, to be applied to oneself or to the deceased in Purgatory.

[179] He liked to repeat that **'our deceased loved ones call us to Eternal Life, to what awaits us in the hereafter**. **They remind us that there is an afterlife, they tell us how to live our daily lives, and they help us not to make mistakes that could jeopardize our salvation**.'

[180] He affirmed that **"many of them are in Purgatory, they are suffering, and that is why they ask for our help, because in this way we hasten their entry into Eternal Bliss. Together they give us an example of how we must live so that we too may attain salvation."**

[181] "After Carlo's death, three priests who did not know each other, one from Peru, another from Brazil, and a third from Costa Rica, wrote to me to tell me that they had dreamed of Carlo, who told them that he prayed in a special way both for the people who asked for his intercession and for those who had known him in life, and for the souls in Purgatory."

[182] **CHARITY TOWARDS ENEMIES.** His mother writes: "We must also learn to endure offenses. In this too, Carlo's life is an example. Although he died so young, he attended the school of "offenses" when, for example, his classmates teased him for going to Mass or for his "unfashionable" way of dressing. And Carlo showed himself, as always, to be a diligent disciple, who knows how to draw good fruit from everything. He knew how to remain silent and not defend himself, not take offense, and despite his 'diversity' he won the appreciation and friendship of his classmates, and also of many adults. His life thus became evangelizing, much more than his 'words.'"

[183] He didn't like people who criticized others and always tried not to get caught up in that kind of talk... He once said to me about it**, "Why dim someone else's light to make your own shine?"**

[184] Because of his great charity, his mother said, "Being close to Carlo was like being close to a source of fresh water."

[185] **"Life is a gift because while we are on this planet, we can increase our level of charity. The higher it is, the more we will enjoy God's Eternal Bliss."**

10. OTHER VIRTUES

[186] "He was very **OBEDIENT** to us. I can truly say that I never had a problem with him. He was always willing to do whatever we asked him to do. This willingness to obey sometimes led him not to rebel even against his schoolmates who played tricks on him. I remember that Beata would get angry with him because she wanted him to be more decisive and not let the other children make fun of him. But Carlo would respond by saying that *Jesus would not be happy if he reacted violently.* And he would continue to behave in the same way.

[187] "I can say with certainty that since Carlo was little, I never had to raise my voice or scold him, because when I told him to do something, he obeyed quickly without answering. When he wanted to do something, he would first ask permission, and if his parents or maternal grandmother weren't there, he would ask the babysitter. I remember when he was about a year and a half old, before touching something, he would point at it with his finger and look at me as if to ask whether he could take it or not. Then he would shake his finger as if to say no or shake his head as if to say yes. If I answered his questions by gesturing that it was okay to touch it, he would take it; otherwise, he wouldn't and would walk away peacefully without getting angry.

[188] "Even when it was time to change schools, he showed his great docility. He never complained, although I'm sure it was sometimes very difficult for him not to. He truly had the virtue of obedience to a heroic degree, which is very rare today, given the global disobedience we witness in all areas, including religion.

[189] "In this regard, I remember him telling me that in 2003 he had dreamed of angels with trumpets unfurled in a blue sky that gradually filled with threatening clouds. Shortly afterwards, the scene changed and Our Lady of Fatima appeared above St. Peter's Square, crowded with people enveloped in a gray light, saying: 'These are difficult times for Christianity, because of disobedience.'"

[190] **LOVE FOR THE POOR**. "Carlo loved his 'caretaker' Rajesh very much, but he wished he were a little less materialistic. From an early age, he wrote letters to Jesus asking for grace to change Rajesh's heart. I remember him being literally surprised that Rajesh spent all his salary on clothes and gifts to send to his family in Mauritius. He was very impressed when he once saw him come home with a huge sack full of shoes. He looked like Santa Claus. He had found a stall in a market that sold everything for one euro and had bought three hundred pairs of sandals to send to his sister as a gift. For Carlo, it was over the top. Imagine Carlo's amazement, a young man who, when I wanted to buy him two pairs of shoes, got very angry because he said one was enough. **"With the money we save**," he told me, "**we can help those who don't even have enough to eat."**

[191] "I remember one day when someone stole the beautiful bicycle we had given him for his birthday from his school. He didn't regret it at all...

[192] "When I told him I would buy him a new one, he replied that he didn't want it and that he preferred to use an old bike that was tucked away in the garage. He fixed it up and started riding it. Smiling and happy with his 'new' bike, restored but still quite rickety. I can still see him on the streets of Milan, wandering around on his bike, stopping to greet the many doormen and concierges he met along the way, the simplest people in the neighborhood, when he went to visit the homeless and needy in the area. His gift was his smile. He conveyed his love to them, a love that flowed from his heart with extreme naturalness. There was nothing artificial about him."

[193] "He was very **GENEROUS** with others, while he was always very frugal and austere with himself. I had to work hard to buy him something, because he never wanted anything. I remember that at the beginning of the school year, I always tried to buy him at least two pairs of new shoes. He always resisted. He wanted to have only one pair, and he wouldn't change them until they were completely worn out. He dressed more simply than his other friends. He didn't follow trends at all. *He didn't pay attention to fashion.* Rather, he always sought simplicity, economy, and moderation. *He was elegant because of his smile,* not because of the way he dressed."

[194] **HUMILITY**. His mother testifies: "He never compared himself to others. He was **MODEST, SIMPLE, AND DID NOT LIKE TO SHOW OFF**.

[195] In regards of the virtue of humility, Carlo wrote in his notes: **"It is the ability to feel one's own evil and God's**

goodness; the ability not to judge others, but to judge only ourselves. Indeed, this humility, brought down from Heaven with Christ, is the fundamental, basic, and central virtue of Catholic Spirituality.

[196] **"The humility that Jesus exercised with His Incarnation. The humility that He lived was not so much the fact of being born in a manger, but rather that He walked along that exhausting path called the Incarnation, because Jesus passed from the infinite, His substance, to the finite, His condition. This exhausting passage from the *infinite* to the *finite* is his humiliation. And it is the continuous example of humility that He gives us with His Incarnation, which He lived for a whole generation, more than thirty years, and which He suffered and offered in the continuous exercise of humility.**

[197] **"Therefore, we Catholics must decide to live this humility, that is, this fundamental virtue by which we bow before God, bow before our neighbor, and immerse ourselves in charity, which is nothing other than humility practiced. For every lack of charity is a lack of humility, and vice versa.**

[198] **"The world is made of pride. The world is characterized by pride. For if we were truly humble, the Lord would bow down before us and grant us his graces. For every grace not granted is an act of pride, and every grace granted is an act of humility: *'Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart'* (Mt 11, 29)."**

[199] **HARD WORK**. "He asked me for permission *to work as a waiter himself* the following year. First of all, he wanted to

have direct experience to better understand the value of money earned by his own efforts, and not always depend on us, his parents, and also to have more means available to help those most in need. And with his savings*, he* had *sponsored some children*. Through certain specialized associations, he wanted to increase the number of children he adopted."

[200] **STRENGTH OF WILL and INNER DRIVE**. Although he "wasn't top of the class in terms of grades... being self-taught in so many things, he amazed adults. For example, instead of playing the flute, which he didn't like very much, he decided to play the saxophone as his musical instrument at school. He learned to play it immediately, by himself, without the help of any teacher... If he had a goal to achieve, he devoted himself to it with great diligence, always achieving his purpose. He had great tenacity and willpower."

[201] **LOVE OF SPORT.** "During his school years, he played several sports: karate, kung fu, tennis, volleyball, soccer, skiing, swimming, and track and field. He showed great commitment, but *never with the competitive spirit* that children normally have. The important thing for Carlo was to be able *to share moments of joy with his friends*. He saw sport as *a means of cultivating the values of friendship, communion, and personal growth.* Carlo was convinced that sport was a very effective way of *strengthening the will,* thanks to which great goals can be achieved."

[202] **LOVE OF TRUTH.** "Carlo was very curious. He wanted to know things and understand them, and he tried hard to comprehend them. He liked to talk to the nun about important things, about religion, about Islam, about relationships with other religions.

[203] **"**He knew how to give very serious and profound answers and was very attentive and participatory. She also remembered him as a transparent, sincere boy: he said what was appropriate to say without fear or aggression."

[204] **SUPERNATURAL VISION OF SUFFERING.** "The long hours spent contemplating Christ crucified and risen and his Blessed Mother at the foot of the Cross (cf. Jn 19:25) led Carlo to delve deeper into the mystery of *human suffering,* the origin of evil, and the value that Christian faith gives to the great questions of man about death, suffering, illness, and man's final destiny...

[205] "Carlo said: **'Mysteriously, all suffering has two sides: the consequence of a previous disorder that caused it and the purifying action of God's mercy, perfectly united with His justice. Indeed, God, in His infinite Wisdom, has arranged that evil, the fruit of sin, that is, of rebellion against God, contributes to the good of those who love Him, through their purification and sanctification**"... Carlo saw the Mercy and Justice of God, which redeems man from the consequences of his sin, as inextricably linked."

[206] **CRITICAL ANALYSIS SKILLS. "**I always loved exchanging opinions and points of view with Carlo about the things that were happening to us. We had conversations on different topics, not limited to questions of faith. We loved reading what was reported in the newspapers and other media, and my son, who had a *great capacity for critical analysis,* realized that much of the news was often *ideologically biased*."

[207] **LIFELONG LEARNING.** “He loved reading the newspapers his father gave him, and they often discussed the news together. This sparked his desire to improvise as a journalist and writer. On the other hand, he felt very inclined to write. One of his favorite games was to invent fantastic stories, such as the one about Pomodorin Laden, a pseudonym for Bin Laden. In this metaphorical story of his, he managed to downplay and reduce the terrible situation engendered by international terrorism that emerged after the fall of the Twin Towers from a perspective of faith, managing to give a Christian meaning to so much pain."

Carlo with his father

[208] **TEMPERANCE AND PENANCE.** "He possessed the virtue of temperance, which not all children of his age have. In this sense, he made *small sacrifices* to help the souls in Purgatory, for example, by giving up his afternoon snack, sweets, and dessert.

[209] "He always offered these small sacrifices to the Virgin Mary, who had expressly asked for them in so many of Her apparitions throughout the centuries.

[210] “He also promised to force himself not to watch the movies he liked best. He never wanted to see violent or vulgar movies, but he really liked cartoons and documentaries about animals. If ambiguous or sexual advertisements were shown on television, he would cover his eyes with his hand.

[211] "Carlo *was not interested in physical perfection*, but *in health*, so he did not dare to practice dangerous sports. In this regard, I remember that he was also very concerned about my health, as I was a little overweight. He would hide sweets from me that I would have eaten if I found them lying around, and he would take me for walks to help me lose weight. He did the same with Rajesh, who was diabetic."

[212] **LOVE OF NATURE.** "Carlo said that **'through Eucharistic Adoration, which is nothing other than adoring God, we rediscover all of Creation**.'"

[213] "Carlo was enchanted by the *Basilica of the Sagrada Familia* by architect Antonio Gaudí, whose cause for canonization is already underway. He totally agreed with Gaudí when he wrote that *'true originality consists in returning to the origin, which is God... Creation continues unceasingly through the mediation of man. Man does not create, but discovers and starts from this discovery. Those who seek the laws of nature to create new works collaborate with the Creator; those who copy do not collaborate."*

[214] "Carlo really liked *Gaudí*. One day he told me that he had received a small sign from him. He had asked him to help him glorify Jesus, who makes himself truly present in the Eucharist, becoming our food and drink. My son admired him greatly. Gaudí was an ascetic and a mystic.

[215] “The entire Gospel is engraved in the stones of the Sagrada Familia. The Sagrada Familia is a book for everyone. For those who have faith, for those who know how to read with their hearts and minds, but also for those who are far from the faith.

[216] **"**Carlo said that **'at a time of such great crisis for the institution of the family, this holy architect represents the divine response to such devastation. While society destroys the family, Gaudí metaphorically rebuilds it through the Basilica of the Holy Family.'**

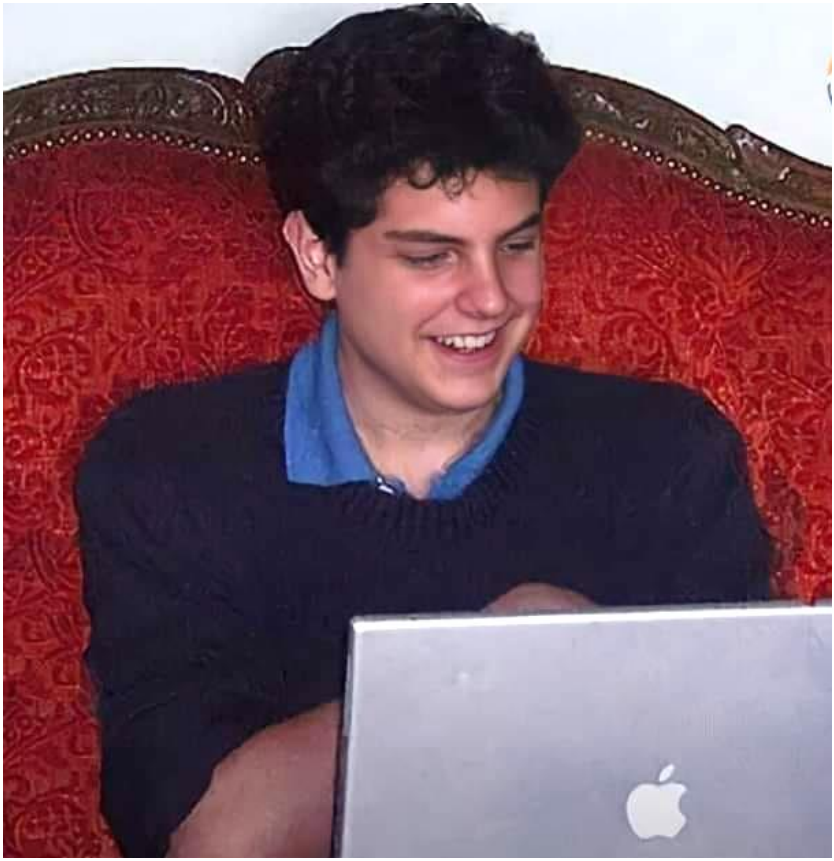
[217] "Carlo himself quoted more than once the prophetic words of Sister Lucia of Fatima, one of the visionaries who witnessed the apparitions of Our Lady in Portugal in 1917: 'The final battle between God and Satan will take place on the terrain of Marriage and the Family [...] Those who work for the sanctity of Marriage and Family will always be fought and opposed in every way. However, Our Lady has already crushed It’s head.'"

[218] **HIS JOY.** “He had a deep *sense of humor* and was able to minimize even the most difficult situations.

[219] “Carlo was the opposite of sadness. I never heard him complain or grumble. On the contrary, he was always positive and optimistic, even in the most difficult situations. He was full of vital energy and considered life to be an immense gift. He wanted to savor it with relish at every moment, because he said that **‘every minute that passes is one minute less that we have available to sanctify ourselves**.’

[220] "He liked Blaise Pascal's meditations on this subject: *'Philosophers say, "Look within yourselves, there you will find your good." And this is not true. Others say, "Seek happiness in distractions." And this is not true either, for it causes some evils. Happiness is neither outside nor inside us; it consists in being in God."*

[221] "He always tried to encourage those who were sad and discouraged. Referring to those who gave in to depression and mistrust, he said something that stuck with me: **'Sadness is looking at oneself; joy is looking at God**.'"



11. LOVE FOR THE CHURCH

[222] Carlo wrote: **"To criticize the Church is to criticize ourselves! The Church is the dispenser of treasures for our salvation."**

[223] "If it was necessary to explain the Church's thinking on delicate issues with thoughtfulness, Carlo was always ready.

[224] "His religion teacher told us that Carlo shared the Church's position on ABORTION and passionately defended the values of unborn life. During religion class, there was a heated discussion in the classroom, and Carlo was the only one who spoke out against abortion. He wasn't afraid to go against the grain; he always defended his ideas firmly, but without trying to impose anything on anyone. Carlo was directly influenced by Jesus and his mother Mary, through silence and prayer, even more than by the books he had read.

[225] "In particular, when it came to the dignity of *life* and the *embryo*. That summer, he devoted himself to a research project assigned to him by his religion teacher. It was on the subject of *assisted fertilization* according to different religions. He was very upset to learn that these techniques often produce surplus embryos that are then frozen or used for medical experiments. Around that time, he confided in me that he had had a nightmare. In his dream, he had seen several frozen people. He was very shaken. He said that **"it would be a sacred task if there were women willing to 'adopt' each of these frozen embryos to give them the chance to come into the world."**

[226] "When it came to the Christian view of *moral life*, Carlo was also not afraid to express his convictions about *purity* and *premarital relationships*. One day, he told a journalist that he was deeply convinced of the beauty of *living chastely* during the engagement period and of his strong opposition to *abortion.* He expressed his ideas firmly but always respectfully, sometimes even in a lighthearted manner, to avoid a tone that was too serious, which in some cases could have upset his interlocutors.

[227] "Father Ilio, his spiritual director, witnessed Carlo's convictions regarding the values of life and morality. He told me that Carlo was once very saddened because some of his schoolmates had expressed support for abortion, masturbation, and premarital relations. He had expressed his opposition and told him that he had encountered a great deal of strangeness and intransigence on his friends."

[228] He once told his parents, **"Our Lady is the only woman in my life**."

[229] "When he was about eight years old, he saw Our Lady of Fatima during a procession in the church. She stopped in front of him, *gave him Her heart, and placed it on his chest*. She told him to consecrate himself to Her Immaculate Heart and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

[230] "One day," Nicola Gori recounts, "in front of the image of Our Lady of Pompeii, he prayed for the conversion of a woman, the mother of a dear friend of the family, who had not approached the sacraments for thirty years. Some time later, this woman went to confession, received Communion, and returned to the practice of Christianity. Carlo attributed this conversion to the intercession of the Virgin Mary and was convinced that by turning to Mary, great graces could be obtained."

[231] But Our Lady of Pompeii was not his only great Marian devotion, as Lourdes and Fatima also held very important places in his heart.

[232] "The places where Our Lady had appeared over the centuries were very important to Carlo. That is why, before he died, he had begun to design an exhibition on the 'Apparitions of Our Lady,' which we later completed. The last trip we took with Carlo was in 2006 to Fatima and Spain.

Carlo in Fatima

[233] "Carlo was very impressed by reading the Memoirs of Sister Lucia of Fatima... The little shepherds asked if they too would be taken to Heaven, and the Virgin replied that Lucia and Jacinta would, but that Francisco would have to pray many Rosaries. One day, shortly after reading this, Carlo said to us, very worried: **"If Francisco, who was so brave, so good, and so simple, had to pray so many Rosaries to go to Heaven, how can I deserve it, since I am so wicked compared to him?"**

[234] Carlo had received many signs from the little shepherds of Fatima. He had also *dreamed of Francisco,* who asked him to *make reparation* and *offer sacrifices* so that people would love and honor the Eucharist more. A few days after *Sister Lucia's* death in 2005, Carlo dreamed of her telling him that by practicing the First Five Saturdays of the month, the destiny of the world could be changed.

[235] “Carlo liked to interpret the Apparitions of Fatima in a way that surprised those who listened to him. He believed that the “Third Secret” could be interpreted in the light of the Eucharist: **“The Cross on the hill can also represent the Sacrifice of Christ offered for the salvation of mankind, which is celebrated at every Mass; the blood that the angels, under the arms of the Cross, pour out on the believers who climb the mountain, weary, is the Blood that the Lord pours out on humanity together with that of the martyrs during the Eucharistic Celebration, which washes and purifies the hearts of men from the sins they have committed. The arrows that strike the faithful climbing the mountain could be a symbol of all the difficulties that humanity faces in order to deserve Paradise. The figure of the bishop dressed in white, whom the Church has associated with John Paul II, who always insisted on the importance of the Eucharist and who was in a certain sense a 'martyr', further clarifies the Eucharistic meaning of the vision.**

[236] "When Carlo was younger, Jacinta appeared to him and told him that there are no words on earth to describe the horror of hell... That is precisely why he often meditated on these Last Mysteries, including Hell and the possibility of ending up down there. From time to time he would say to me: **'Mum, do you realize what it means to go to Hell for all eternity? Try to imagine being in one place forever, forever, forever, forever...**'.

[237] "Being aware of the risk that so many people run of going there was what prompted him to create the exhibition on 'Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven.'"

[238] "Carlo deeply regretted that so many were at risk of being lost for all eternity: for him, it was a shocking reality. He had written down some passages from the saints describing Hell. He used them to catechize those who did not believe in the existence of Hell. Carlo was also very devoted to St. John Bosco, who, accompanied by his Guardian Angel, was also taken to visit Hell.

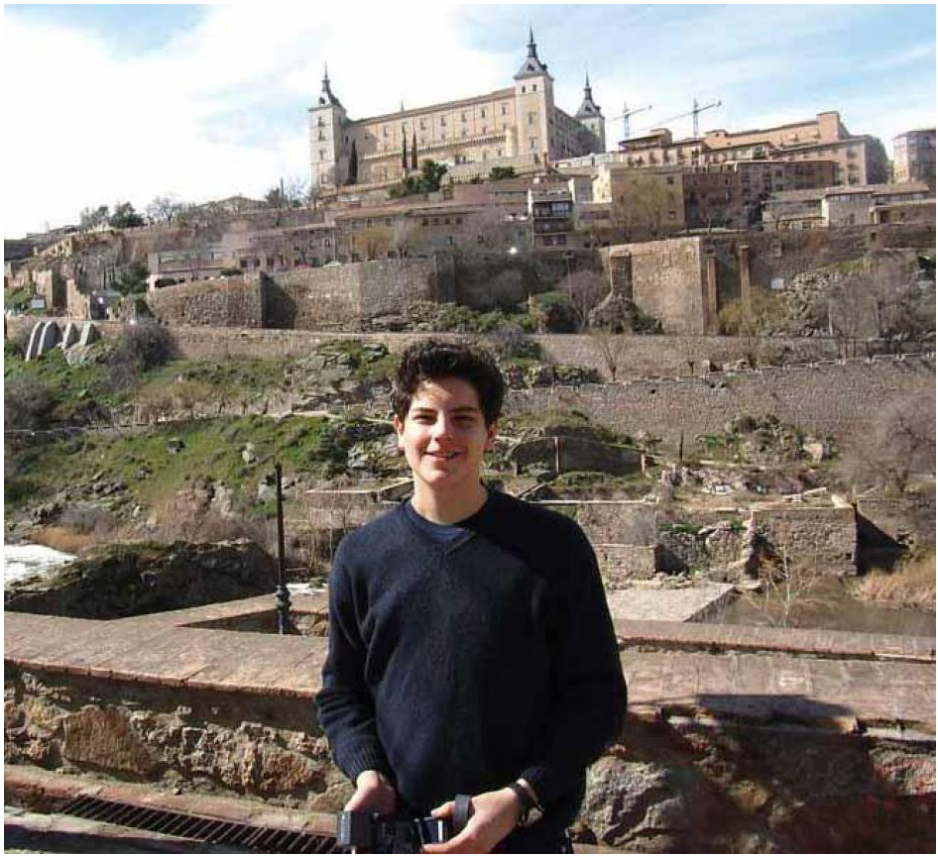
[239] "In the apparition at Kibeho, Africa, to the visionary Nathalie on May 15, 1982, the Virgin Mary conveyed this message: 'No one gets to heaven without suffering... The Son of Mary is never separated from suffering.' This apparition was recognized in 2001 and had greatly impressed Carlo. Here, the Virgin asked that the Rosary dedicated to Her Sorrows, known as the *Rosary of the Seven Sorrows,* be prayed every Friday, promising that those who prayed it would receive the grace necessary to repent of their sins before dying. Carlo recited it often; he liked to meditate on Mary's sufferings.

[240] "He was also very devoted to the Chaplet of the Tears of Our Lady."

[241] "Carlo also made the heroic act of dedicating all his good works and prayers to the souls in Purgatory and to the intentions of Our Lady, who, **'being our Mother**,' he said, **'intercedes for all who turn to Her, especially for those most in need**.'

[242] "For Carlo, **'Mary Most Holy, Mother of the Savior, walked with Jesus through all the stages of His earthly existence, and even today, until the end of time, She will continue to walk through all the ages of history, accompanying by the hand those who entrust themselves to Her with trust and filial abandonment, recognizing Her as a shining example and Mediatrix of all graces**.'

[243] That is why he affirmed: **"The Rosary is the shortest ladder to climb to Heaven**."



13. VOCATION

[244] "Carlo felt great affection for *the cloistered monks and nuns*. He said that their eyes were almost always very bright and that being around them gave you a feeling of lightness, almost as if your soul were rising up... He formed a special friendship with the nuns at the Romite Monastery, who welcomed him into their convent when he made his First Communion. He asked me to accompany him to visit them to ask for their prayers. They were like **"guardian angels on earth"** to him**.** Carlo had a strong connection with the cloistered nuns, whom he considered sisters who helped him grow in his love for Jesus... Every time we went to visit them, he would ask them to help him pray for the conversion of sinners and for the liberation of souls in Purgatory.

[245] In the summer of 2006, Carlo asked his mother, **"Do you think I should become a priest?"** She replied, "You will see for yourself; God will reveal it to you."

[246] "Carlo saw in *consecrated* men *and women* special people who had generously given everything to find 'everything.' That is why he was convinced that Jesus could not deny anything to their prayers. They had chosen to live only for Him, therefore, God would not disappoint their requests."

14. ILLNESS & DEATH

[247] He wasn't feeling well... it seemed like a normal flu. No one expected it. Upon entering the hospital, he said to his mother, **"I'm not leaving this place**."

[248] Indeed, he was diagnosed with one of the worst types of leukemia, M3. He endured the terrible pain with strength and faith: "It had been years," a nurse testified, "since I had seen a patient in such condition. I wondered how it was possible that he did not complain of pain, since his legs and arms were swollen and filled with fluid."

[249] During his illness, he showed superhuman courage and a faith that led him to offer all his sufferings for the Church and for the Pope. He told his parents, **"I offer to the Lord the sufferings I will have to endure for the Pope and for the Church, so that I will not have to go to Purgatory and can go straight to Heaven**."

[250] He even tried to minimize the pain that doctors described as excruciating, saying, **"There are people who suffer much more than I do!**"

[251] "When, one day, he was asked, 'How are you feeling?', Carlo replied with his usual calmness, **'As always, fine**!' Half an hour later, he fell into a coma...

[252] His mother recounts: "Since he was a child, he was convinced that he would die from a ruptured blood vessel in his brain, which was actually what happened, because the cause of his death was a brain hemorrhage.

[253] “Carlo said that sooner or later we would all go up to Mount Golgotha, the place where Jesus was crucified... Although our Calvary was brief, it was no less intense. Seeing such a beautiful son, in the prime of his youth, like a field filled with flowers in spring, transformed in a few hours by pain until he lost even his appearance—because his face was swollen from bleeding, and swollen lymph nodes disfigured his features—was a great test of faith for us.

[254] "I remember buying Carlo's first toy, a *little white lamb*... From an early age, Carlo became very fond of his stuffed animal, which he always kept with special care. I think that little lamb foreshadowed his destiny a little, since before he died, in imitation of our Lord, who offered his life for us, he also offered his sufferings for the salvation of souls... A few months before my son died, I had a very strange dream in which a little lamb was bled to death and left to die, while a voice in Arabic spoke words that meant *sacrifice* and *victim.* During the last days of his life, he had many hemorrhages. That dream, to some extent, foreshadowed the bloody death of my son, amid so much suffering and physical pain. I am deeply convinced that Carlo, in imitation of Jesus, was *a victim pleasing to God for the salvation of many.* My thought is that *Jesus associated him in a special way to His Passion...".*

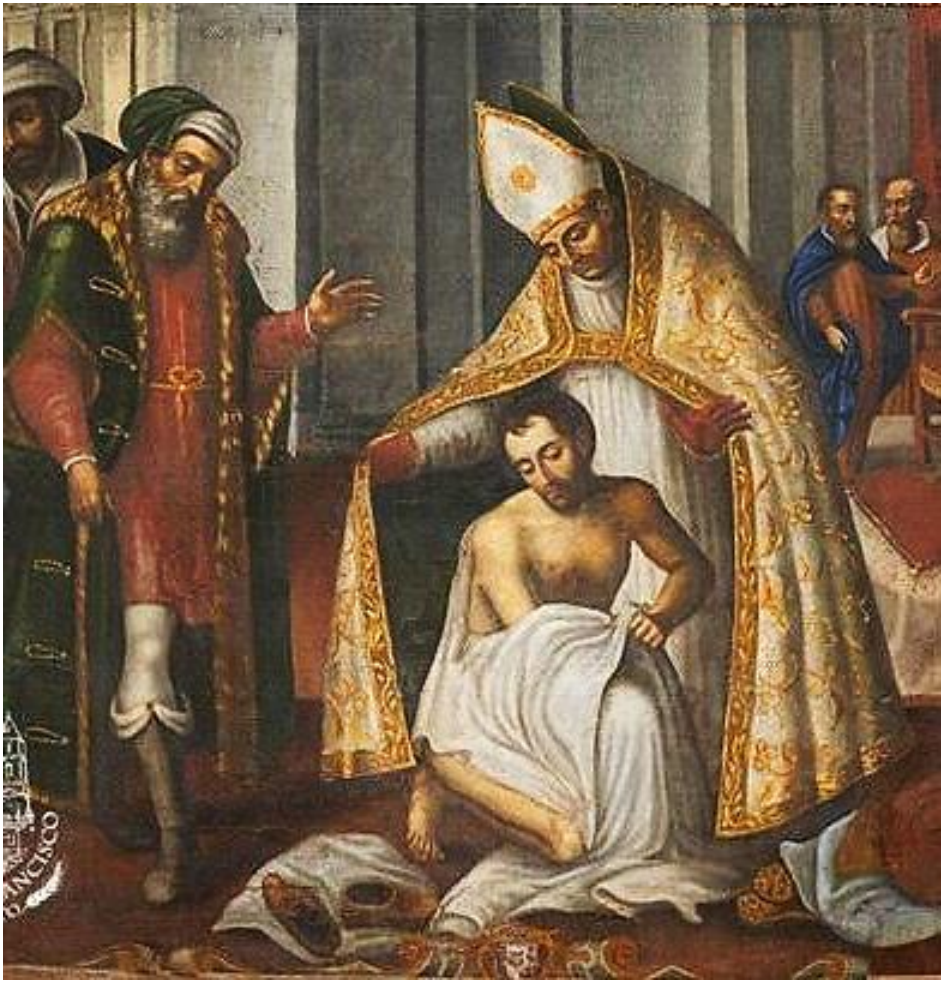
[255] Having received the Anointing of the Sick, he died on October 11, 2006.

[256] “The death of a young person is not always accepted with faith, and after Carlo’s untimely death, I discovered that many of his classmates and friends were angry with the Lord. In particular, there was a dear friend of his who told me that her grandfather was ninety years old and couldn't understand why Jesus hadn't let him die instead of Carlo... But Carlo used to say, **'In Heaven their way of thinking is very different from ours!'.**

Video in which he said: "I am destined to die"

[257] There was no room for anyone else at the funeral: many people whom the family had never seen before. The fact is that Carlo had secretly helped countless souls: "Lots of people talked to me about Carlo, and I knew nothing about it. They told me about my son's life."

[258] Even before he knew he was ill, he recorded a video in which he said that if he died, he would like to be buried in Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis. And it is precisely in this city so dear to him that his remains now rest, in the "Shrine of the Splogliazione" (*where St. Francis of Assisi renounced his possessions and stripped himself of his clothes*), where St. Francis of Assisi stripped himself of his earthly garments to be clothed in the mantle of the bishop of Assisi, symbolizing his clothing of Christ, and thus began the path of his conversion.



"Only those who do the Will of God will be truly free."

Carlo Acutis

15. MIRACLE FOR BEATIFICATION

[259] *"I want to stop vomiting!"* was the request of Matheus, a six-year-old Brazilian boy who, due to a malformation, could not stop vomiting, at the moment of praying to the venerable Carlos Acutis and kissing one of his relics. The boy had been told that he had to make this request only in his mind, but he prefered to ask aloud he wanted to stop vomiting. Once home, the boy asked for something to eat and asked his brother what food he wanted to eat: rice, beans, steak, and french fries. His mother also served Matheus an adult portion, thinking he would not finish it, but Matheus finished his plate and asked for more. Luciana waited for the boy to vomit the food, but that did not happen.

Matheus, miraculously healed by Carlo

Reliquary with Carlo Acutis' hair

16. MIRACLE FOR CANONIZATION

[260] On July 8, 2022, Liliana, a woman from Costa Rica, prayed at the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis in Assisi, where she left a letter with her request, because six days earlier, her daughter *Valeria* had fallen off her bicycle in Florence, where she was studying at the university, and suffered severe head trauma. She required specialized surgery, as well as the removal of the right occipital bone to reduce pressure on the brain. The doctors gave her very little chance of survival.

[261] That same day, the hospital informed him that Valeria had begun to breathe spontaneously. The next day, she began to move and partially regain her speech. On July 18, a CT scan confirmed that the bleeding had stopped, and on August 11, Valeria was sent to rehabilitation therapy, where she made rapid progress. On September 2, Valeria and Liliana made another pilgrimage to Assisi to thank Carlo for the miracle.

Her mother wrote: "It is not every day that parents attend the beatification of a child. *The path to holiness, however, is a path for everyone*. Each of us can walk it...

“I don’t want Carlo to be remembered as Superman. Carlo was a child and then a teenager like so many others, but he always wanted and learned how to trust in God’s love. His path—I repeat—is possible for everyone.”

Carlo Acutis' parents, at his grave

A.M.D.G.